

Transcript
from
The International Video Art Symposium

5 - 7 March 1979

AM

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Sherry Miller
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December 17th, 1979

Dear Sherry Miller,

Enclosed is the transcript of the meetings at the Kingston Video Conference.

As you will see, it is mostly about distribution.

It would be nice to have more information about ETC's current activities.

Further copies of the transcripts can be got from the Agnes Etherington Gallery in Kingston, Ontario for \$2.50 a copy.

Regards,



Martha Fleming
Video Curator

TRANSCRIPT
FROM
THE INTERNATIONAL VIDEO ART SYMPOSIUM
5-7 MARCH 1979

THE AGNES ETHERINGTON ART CENTRE, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, KINGSTON, ONTARIO

INTERNATIONAL VIDEO ART SYMPOSIUM : 5-7 MARCH, 1979

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THE AGNES ETHERINGTON ART CENTRE, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, KINGSTON, ONTARIO

INTRODUCTION

The International Video Art Symposium was the fourth of a series of similar gatherings involving other areas of the visual arts which the Agnes Etherington Art Centre has hosted since 1975. The symposium format of addresses, presentations and panel discussions has proved a viable method of generating a dialogue amongst artists from different parts of the country and between artists and an interested although sometimes bewildered public.

The video project was unique with the addition of 'International' in its title. This was the first time that we attempted to assimilate views from different parts of the globe as well as from various areas of the nation. It was felt that the greatest benefit from the point of view of the artists and of the public would be gained by viewing the Canadian video activity within a larger global context. To that end, Dr. Wulf Herzogenrath, Director, Kölnischer Kunstverein, West Germany, was invited to participate as keynote speaker. David Hall from London Video Arts, London, England, was a panelist on distribution problems. Jaime Davidovitch came from New York's Artists' Television Network to contribute to the TV: Art in Your Home panel. Maria Gloria Bicocchi of Follonica, Italy, was asked to address the distribution question. You will find the papers prepared by these guests included in this publication. It should be noted here for the record, however, that at the last moment Maria Gloria Bicocchi and Dr. Herzogenrath were both prevented from attending due to illness and other extenuating circumstances.

All of the artists who made formal presentations to the symposium were asked to submit a paper to be printed as a permanent record of the event. This is the compilation of those papers. The last item in the Table of Contents is an edited transcript of the actual dialogue from the final evening's panel discussion on TV: Art in Your Home. Michael Goldberg's presence on the panel was a tape he made of himself. This will explain his silent rebuttal to the comments on his statement that evening.

The discussions at the International Video Art Symposium did not solve the pressing problems of ideology (TV or not TV), production and distribution facing the video artist. But that was not its intention. The aims of the conference were to confront the issues, propose alternative courses, exchange ideas and provide a meeting space for video artists. The art-forum is relatively young in Canada and its protagonists relatively few in number. Although the artists knew each other well through their work, few had made personal acquaintances. The intensity of the discussions on the three days, scheduled and impromptu, and the number of hours of viewing time spent, indicate the worthiness of the project.

There are several individuals and institutions without whose patient assistance, financial and otherwise, the project would not have reached its ultimate success. Very special thanks go first and foremost to Peggy Gale as the guest curator for the project. The Art Centre relied entirely on her expertise in the field to bring the symposium to fruition. The staff of the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, in all areas, were extremely patient and helpful during each stage of the project. I would also like to express gratitude to Kingston Cable TV for agreeing to broadcast without charge a five minute

introduction to the conference prior to its opening and to Queens' TV for their assistance in recording the final evening and lending extra equipment.

The financial support of the Video Division of the Canada Council for the core funding of the project is acknowledged with gratitude, together with the support of the Ontario Arts Council. The foreign guests were able to participate through the generosity of their individual consulates: we are grateful to Dr.R.Dencker of the Goethe Institute, Toronto, Mr.Hobbs of the British Council, and M.André Menard of the Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, for supporting the Art Centre in this regard.

Linda J.Milrod
September, 1979

VIDEO ARTISTS AND TELEVISION AS A MEDIUM by Wulf Herzogenrath

Video in Germany: some facts of the development up to the present.

In the attempt to formulate a few ideas on the relationship between the video artist, the public and the media, the first difficulty is with definition. What is a video artist, after all? How can the Museum, the home of week-long shows of static things, or else the Cinema, with its fixed seats and settled hours, deal with a fluid medium like Video? And what is the position of the other media, Television, which are content to report facts, but rarely reflect on their own capacities? We shall only form a public for video when the other three fields have been defined, i.e. when it is clear that video is an art on its own.

In spite of all the overlappings, we have learned to define what makes a painter, a film-maker, a photographer. The art world has developed a complicated apparatus: exhibitions, collections, presentations of all kinds. The media react to grades of popularity. If an exhibition counts 100,000 visitors, there are special reports in the press and on television. Perhaps the most astonishing statistic is that in the last ten years the visitors to the Museums, Kunsthallen and Kunstvereine in W.Germany, have been three times as many as those to the football stadia. Even at 11 p.m., a television broadcast reaches 4,000,000 observers, more than the total number of visitors to documenta 6 in Cassel.

Everybody talks of the electronic age. Television is almost universal, (although - astonishingly - its consumption did decline last year in West Germany). Then why should video, the electronic medium, experience such difficulty of acceptance in the field of art? There are three grounds.

I

This is a young medium for art. It is only fifteen years since Nam June Paik experimented first with the phenomena of the television screen. (illus 1). The first 'Video Exhibitions' or productions took place less than ten years ago. This development is parallel to that in other reproductive techniques. Developed for other purposes, they were adopted, usually in the next generation, by the artists, and transformed from a purely reproductive to a more creative medium. This was the case in the past with the woodcut, the copper engraving and the lithograph and quite recently with the silkscreen print, which within fifteen years of its invention spread rapidly as an artistic medium.

II

Europeans are afraid of technics in art.

This explains a good deal of the difference of the development in Europe and the USA in the last fifteen years. In this time - to start with a simple piece of evidence - the large and even middle Art - museums of America have all added a photographic section to their collections. Since 1971 six of these museums have also founded video departments. These hold exhibitions, and aim to establish cable television stations with their own programmes. (Long Beach Museum, Los Angeles, has already done so.) In Germany, on the other

hand, even after the great photo-boom of 1978 with its important video exhibitions, only two museums have photographic sections at all. These are the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, which purchased and enlarged the collection of L. Fritz Gruber, and the Folkwang Museum in Essen, which has integrated the collection of the former Folkwang School, made by Otto Steinert. The Folkwang has also built up a video studio, which up to the present is not much used.

Ever since the market for prints was established, around 1500, what has counted has been the personal 'handwriting,' the individual gesture with the line. Dürer could not protect his intellectual property (the invention of pictures and their formulation.) Painting was public property. The products of his workshop were all he could copyright; and his lawsuits against the 'copyists' were concerned only with the business side. Surely we must reverse this position today. Pictorial conception and realisation should be rated above mere manual execution. With a work of art the spiritual father stands above the corporeal. This situation in art-history was clarified most recently by Marcel Duchamp. He took as his theme the contradiction of the artist-craftsman: on the one hand the inspired interpreter of his own time, on the other a man with a business contract which he is bound to fulfill. What moves the spectator is the idea, incorporated in the visual, objective work.

If we apply this to our present theme, it indicates that it is unimportant for the work of art whether the artist uses video, oil paint, marble or a camera. This explains a remark often quoted, but only in the manual tradition of Europe comprehensible: John Baldessari's "video is like a pencil." No-one disputes today that with this 'pencil' it is possible, either to "make new wine in old wine-skins" (Allan Kaorow) or to brew new liquor altogether. And yet the realities of the cultural scene have changed but little. The spectator thinks that with a glance of a few seconds he has 'seen' a work. An exhibition with 150 numbers can be absorbed in an hour or less. Video, on the other hand, whether video-sculptures, video tapes or video-installations, demands a specific time, with fixed hours for the commencement, just as in the cinema, the concert - or television itself. This basic difference results in certain demands on the presentation of video in exhibitions or museums.

1. To realise the possibility that image and reality are simultaneously visible. Only with video-electronics is this attainable. For this a closed-circuit installation is used. (Illus. 12) For the first time in the history of art the spectator does not contemplate the art-object from the outside. He takes part in it, becomes a part of its content. The camera photographs him as he enters the room and reproduces his image - so far as he can see - simultaneously. The work of Peter Campus (at the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, N.Y. and in single objects at 'Project 74' and documenta 6) shows the capacities of the medium in a visually and psychologically impressive form.

2. Video tapes must be shown by trained personnel in video-libraries, (Illus. 11) so that the spectator is properly informed. Time spent in such rooms must be as fully used as possible. Many artists, when they realise how precious the time is, do shorten and intensify their work. Whereas they used to take advantage of the full length of the tape, they try today to work as sparingly and precisely as is possible. Another technique is to produce tapes in sections. These can be seen as a whole or in their various parts.

3. Perhaps the best conditions are those offered by symposium-like performances, with a concentrated offering of several tapes, video-performances and the possibility of discussion. The multiple form and variety with which the medium is used, make clear the breadth of video-art - and also that the electronics, the monitor, the video-tape are nothing but the vehicle, without influence on style or value.

111

Leaflet, newspaper or book, however good the illustration or layout, use the language as their main instrument of information. The same applies to the radio, but here from the start music had an almost equal share of time. At first that meant the reproduction and broadcasting of existing music. But by 1951 the West German Radio in Cologne was broadcasting music made by electronic means. An Electronic Studio was set up, under the direction first of Herbert Eimert and later that of Karlheinz Stockhausen. Nor was this an isolated case. By 1961 there existed 22 similar experimental and production studios in a row of countries.

The history of television in Europe and America has been quite different. In 1968 the West German Radio produced the first electronically manipulated broadcast, 'Black Gate Cologne', by Otto Piene and Aldo Tambellini, which made use of many video devices. (Illus. 13) But this exhausted the Europeans' courage and nothing more was done. In the USA the first activities were those of Fred Barzyk from WGBH in Boston in 1969 (Illus. 15). There followed a series of experimental studios at various television stations (Illus. 16) and the setting up of smaller units (such as synthesizers) at Colleges and Universities. The first larger production was financed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra (Illus. 15) and this encouraged the video artists in the United States.

In Europe in 1978 there are no studios of this kind at all. Those responsible for television in Germany are not even conscious that there is a need for such a thing. The only synthesizer in Germany - one of limited capacity - stands in the musical department of WDR television in Cologne.

Electronic effects are used, now and then, as gags in shows or plays. But a comparison with the Electronic Studio and the significance of Karlheinz Stockhausen shows the incomprehensible ignorance and reserve of the television managers. Not even the symbols for a pause are products of video. Instead, painters are commissioned to make pictures - often of the wrong dimensions - and the text is spread out over them. Art for television has to be something one can film.

What is the reason for this bankruptcy? TV people think as journalists. They want something on which to report. 'Art' is outside the camera. Making a film of it is what they do and that is broadcast. No electronic language is developed here - what could it be but colour-effects made with the synthesizer? So artists working in this field are frustrated, or if allowed access at all are forced into a ready-made production. Video tapes, that is the finished product, are not broadcast. The only exceptions here have been the Wagner-visualisation of Ron Hays and in 1977 six evenings with works by 20 artists of documenta 6. (The latter included a satellite live-broadcast with discussion.) The same is true of performance-art. Live-actions, such as those on the Austrian radio with Peter Weibel, Douglas Davis and Richard Kriesche, are very rare exceptions. One reason is certainly fear, fear of the imagination of other people, not bound to a

bureaucratic apparatus. The other, as said before is the training of television personnel as journalists. They want to report on so-called reality and document it. They forget that this second reality has its own picture-speech. It is not just a question of the small screen of the monitor and the more rapid picture-frequency. They forget too the long-trained passivity of the television audience.

Artists would be in a better position to challenge this blind trust in the second reality of television. They would no longer buoy up the public with false hopes, but would create counter-stimuli, phantasies, and worlds of pictures. They should recognize the television as a Pandora's box, from which the evil has flown out and only hope remains.

I hope that these general observations will give something of the European, or at least the German point of view and serve as a basis for discussion. I will now give a few facts, supported by slides, concerning the history of video-art in the Federal Republic and will end up with a short tour of the video section of documenta 6 (1977) in Cassel.

Slide 1. It is seldom that one can fix a point in history so exactly as this the beginning of video-art in Western Germany. The start was made in Wuppertal in March of 1963 with Paik's exhibition: 'Exposition of Music - Electronic Television'. Ten television sets stood in a room and Paik manipulated them. It was a Fluxus-gesture, but at the same time an attempt to make new pictures by electronic means.

Slide 2. For the West German Radio Otto Piene and Aldo Tambellini produced the first 'free' video tape, 'Black Gate Cologne', which was telecast in January 1969.

Slide 3. Gerry Schum, an idealistic pioneer, founded a 'Television Gallery' in Düsseldorf. He produced works which had their permanent form only as visual documents. The film, or rather television, record is in itself the work of art. His first, 'Land Art', contains the work of eight artists. It too was shown for the first time in 1969.

Slide 4. The first video-studios to be set up in Europe were in the Folkwang Museum in Essen and in the Lijnbaan Centre in Rotterdam, (1977). In the first little original material has been produced. But the second was the site of the first inclusive video exhibition in Europe, in 1979. This was four years after the show 'Video as a creative Medium' at the Howard Wise gallery in New York, the catalogue of which you see here.

Slide 5. Gerry Schum produced a tape with Josef Beuys which is itself a comment on the medium. Beuys has covered-up the screen with felt and then bombards the set with boxing-gloves. It is the symbolic answer of the TV viewer to the betrayal of the ideals propagated for the medium at its start. Is this the task of the artist? In this four-minute tape Beuys sees it so.

Slide 6. Perhaps the most successful tape from the pure visual standpoint was the 'X-Projection' made by Schum with Knoebel, a young artist from Düsseldorf. A car carrying a light-projector and a camera is driven through the city streets at night. It flashes a cross of light over the houses, walls, trees and illuminated signs, all of which is recorded on the film.

types easily distinguished from each other. There is a visit by Beryl Korot to the streets of the urban environment. Her method is to approach the subject continuously, from the outside, and this corresponds to the rhythm of contrast and of similarity of the pictures which show on the screens.

Slide 14 Antonio Muradada is a filmmaker who lives in France and New York. He had works which are made at the same time, synchronized in a frame. Here is the last ten minutes of the film. It shows, from left to right, Washington D.C., Moscow, and Moscow from left to right. There follow ten more minutes of the film. It shows the streets of these cities, showing the population for which the film was made. Different as the social systems are, the film of the world are surprisingly similar. Is there already a common international feeling in speech?

Slide 15 In her 'Three Tales', Rebecca Herr showed in Vasser three videotapes simultaneously. But these were not synchronized and related only by theme. All three were part of a film of New Mexico, shown in a film. The film was made in 1971, in the first year of the creative faculty.

Slide 16 Video installation, with a single tape can also be used various, born from the point of view of content and of style. For example, Shideko Kubota's 'Much descending the staircase' is an idea, a film, and a paraphrase of Duchamp's painting, in the electronic medium. As the slide shows, down the four real steps her figure is shown and the figure repeats itself continuously.

Slide 17 Madeline Kahn's film is a series of drawings and sequences of photographs, a film which is a series of drawings. A series of Japanese style film. It was made in 1971, and it is a film of the director towards the work, which is a film of the director. The subcutaneous body language of a game, a film of the director, a film of the director, and kinetics.

Slide 18 Rebecca Herr presented a performance of the 'Fandale wadow', the dance of a feather object and a film, on two monitors placed together, each showing it from another side. The film's spoken texts support the subtle but impressive action. It was made in 1971, and it is a film of the director. The subcutaneous body language of a game, a film of the director, a film of the director, and kinetics.

Slide 19 Ulrike Rosenfeld belongs to the new German Liberation Movement in the Federal Republic. But her work, which is a film of the director, is a film of the director. It was made in 1971, and it is a film of the director. The subcutaneous body language of a game, a film of the director, a film of the director, and kinetics.

Slide 20 In most of the video installations for the intellectuals and the general public too was the film of the director. It was made in 1971, and it is a film of the director. The subcutaneous body language of a game, a film of the director, a film of the director, and kinetics.

Slide 21 The document opened with three different versions which were broadcast to the public in Germany and other countries, live, by satellite. It was the first time that a film was done for an art show and not for a festival later, a creation for a rural even the kiss on television took the broadcast but did not show it. Park opened the exhibition, Bresson's story for the first time about his life and work as always. The last nine minutes of the film a common nation

Slide 22 The most successful performance was that of Juliette Moormann, his old comrade-in-arms from the 1930s. He played the part with a video camera. In the film, he appeared reversed and did not move. He was the only one

Slide 23 To end up with Park's last performance, which was a film alone along the apparatus, as though he was alone in the world. The camera moved slowly, as if it was a camera in the world, just as in the last of the film, the camera moved with a deep, and a slow, as if it was a camera, but it was a camera, not a camera, but a medium able to be used in many different ways.

I thank you for your attention and for the fact that you are a part of now you a little of the future, and for the fact that you are a part of now

wulf herzogentrath

The sun was blinding. I staggered slightly on the curb and gripped D_____'s arm for support. Un-on, only 3.30 and more than the class lines are blurred already.

Making videotapes and watching videotapes develops certain insights into the relationship between the individual and technology at large, i.e. there is no place to hide. Specifically, video equipment is moody and emotional. It has to be coaxed, coerced and manipulated. The sensuality which may and does emerge is perverse and difficult. It is not naturally sensual, rather it's brittle and irritating and demanding of a continual simplification and reduction in terms of imagery. Video is about transmuting essentials and demands that there be something essential to transmit.

Anyone who has made videotapes understands these things and is also forced to understand alot about production in this society."

"We are lost," said D_____. suddenly.

Not at all, I replied, "This is an essential point, but there is no need for despondence..."

No, no, he insisted, "I mean this is the wrong street." We managed to secure a taxi with ease.

"Art production does challenge the modern code of production proper. It challenges the sophisticated and intractable division of labour, the need for systematic and authoritative control, the detailed and irrevocable planning, the judgements based on use, i.e. cash generating potential. In working in video one constantly comes up against these attitudes toward production. Furthermore, the hardware itself (particularly as we sadly leave the era of the portable with a growing trend toward studios) has more in common with a corporation than an artist, expensive and exclusive and time is money etc. Beyond this, one is constantly having to debunk the technicians role in society, i.e. the modern alchemist, snug and reticent, the one who knows but won't tell. It is important that video artists work against these attitudes rather than neatly fitting in to the wretched oppression of production in this society."

J_____. was slumped in the backseat looking thoughtful and frankly, a bit dazed. Finally, we arrived and I regained his attention.

"The other videotape which I am screening, CASTING CALL, touches on these perils of production, via fear and loathing in the editing room and a refusal to knuckle under to the relentless demands of Production. The cast, the set, the props, the hardware, the script, the camera etc., are neurotic, sulky and uncooperative. Production races ahead but it's continually sabotaged and subverted.

CASTING CALL was produced at the Western Front in Vancouver. Western Front video provides excellent facilities for the visiting artist, as well as first class technical help, an almost unlimited access to the hardware and an indulgent and relaxed situation to work in. It's video paradise, unheard of in the east of Canada, but, working in that situation makes it very clear that high tech is seductive and that the important thing is to use it but not fall for it. High tech is a tool, that we should manipulate rather than letting it manipulate us. Making video tapes involves tension, insecurity and general anxiety as does making any kind of art, and so art has a purpose, and doubt and skepticism are anti-totalitarian and furthermore, subverting ones ego is just giving in to general fascism.

MAKING VIDEO CABLE ACCESS, ARTISTS COOPERATION, AIDS & AIDS by Paul Wong

Video Art- Yes, It is an art form. No, it is not a passing whim.

Although the use of the medium by artists has been well heralded, exhibited and critically acclaimed a major portion of the art public and art mandrins still only acknowledge video, it's presence as something new, new, not quite legitimate art and really only treat it as form in which serious art it will venture to, as an aside from their usual norm of working, video is something to "fool around and to experiment with". The fact is a great many artists do just that, they foolaround with video.

It's boring is still the usual norm of criticism, "boring" is such a nice & intelligent remark by such nice & intelligent people. Another generality - It's not marketable, it's not valuable and not worth collecting, but let's have a video exhibit on, as a most every other major museum has done likewise, the board of directors will inquire into what it is, what is the good, what is the bad, what is the art, where is the art and will probably conclude what's happened to the state of art and let's get back to basics.

Video Art is no longer experimental at all, elements of it most certainly are, such as with those artists who are involved in the technical manipulation of imagery and most certainly areas of experimental occur, the use of video as a communications device, such as "low beam" and "satellite transmissions". When an artist approaches a work with clarity, direction and has a sense of the final result and carries out this work with his/her skills in relationship to the capacity of the medium, whether or not they are working in that medium or not, as if it is their natural art.

Unfortunately, much of the media arts must gain acceptance from within the ranks of the existing stigmatized art institutions, fortunately, due to the very nature of video technology, the video artist can also extend the interest beyond and outside the realms of the established modes of presentation perhaps to the artist's advantage is the wholehearted, no hesitation and no prance with the ruling ranks. The video artist community has played an important role valuating, defining and redefining the nature of video and the multi-faceted use of the medium by artists. It is or does not the use of video by an artist immediately qualify as a work of art? The biggest disadvantage that faces the video artist is in the very use of the television form as the means of expression. The first time video art viewers cannot usually get beyond the boredom, the boredom being this is not television, this is slow, this is not entertaining and of course it is unbearably television. Well, you can hardly blame your audience, after all they have been subjected to and have consumed countless hours of television, their perceptions of what is and what should be expected is jaded. The artist's role is to broaden the perception, the audiences must be willing to accept that this is a different angle, that this is a further exploration of a medium which has been exploited and institutionalized by the delivery you to the advertising television industry. The artist and independent video producers are created regardless of these precedents dictated from the industry.

Further to the low perception, the viewer must be educated to differentiate between the different uses and approaches to the medium. The whole area of independent video production at first glance is a confusing issue. One must get behind the surfaces and to the reality about producing in the

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Vancouver Art Gallery, 1-23 April 1978"

Pierre Saladeau and other Canadian producers joined as some of the leading video producers in 1968, at the time, at the National Film Board in Montreal, was one of the four members of vidéographe and initiator of the first video television station (see introduction). Pierre Saladeau was a director of the "14th" at the Canada Council, Robert Fournier was a member of the members of the recently formed "Comité de développement de la vidéo à Montréal".

John provides particular, and valuable, insight into the situation in Quebec with regard to video.

Their answers to the following questions are presented as they see fit, allowing broader representation of views with respect to a very difficult set of issues, as well as the possibility of comparison.

where questions of the type "Can I see the view from the top of the mountain?" relating to their physical properties of the environment are asked. In developing, we have proposed a model of the child's view format

The interviewer [redacted] name and title of the
 Part 1 reports have been approved [redacted] and
 speaks also for Julien Poulin.

IS VIDEO IN QUEBEC IN A STATE OF CRISIS?

PF/JP I would say yes, I would say it is in a state of crisis - like everything else, like the economy, like the political system, like the state of crisis. And there are a lot of people who are not happy because there was more money, a lot of money, and it was in a period where there was a lot of money, and now there is a lot of money with the money. Sometimes the money is not there because there was a lot of money to get the money, a little bit, a rich society, and have our uses, a lot of money, and these things were the first to be used, and a few more, and that are closed. And also, sometimes, they are not there, where in Quebec. And there are a few people who are not happy, and some people tried to say that it was not a crisis, but it is a crisis, and we are going to be the winners, and the winners are not, and all kinds of things, but it is a crisis, and it is not, so in that way it is not in a state of crisis.

[illegible][illegible]

to accept that the work was more than an amateurish and passing phase (one has heard similar remarks in articles about video, as though it were a fad, rather than a means). But due to a great deal of incentive from the filmmakers themselves, co-ops in London, New York and elsewhere established not only an international network for distribution and shows, but facilitated an international platform for critical and theoretical discourse. Since then the researchers have (certainly in Britain) adjusted their views, discuss, and acclaim the work, and now provide substantial support and funding. The co-ops are still not without their problems of course, and I am not saying that everything about their procedural conduct should apply to video. However, the basic principle is not one to be ignored.

This has of course already been taken up by community-video people, though it would seem that they are somewhat more wary of their work usually, integrate into a larger context of education and not often considered as the ultimate aim. The aim of a video co-op is a collective involvement where types of work, how to use video, and their place of operation are collectively determined, not from the need for separate viewing and distribution (this aspect to be the case in Britain, though it may be a point of contention here).

Having set the scene in Britain, and noted at the proper point on a side note, I must now say something about London video arts which grew in that context. Modelled loosely on the co-op format, it was born out of discussion between myself and a number of other British video artists, who formed as a steering committee. The purpose was to establish a non-profit organisation to promote, show and distribute independently made art video. Here, although the idea was to set up a workshop to facilitate tape production and experimentation with inside a video centre, to provide a room and space for showing these works and works produced elsewhere, and, ideally, to create a tape library and distribution system which would include international as well as home products and, perhaps most important in the long term, to stimulate a dialogue on current practice and theoretical issues.

Needless to say, lack of funding was a great stumbling block. The history of our attempt to achieve, after many months, an extremely lengthy and difficult struggle to receive a grant. It is to say that public funding bodies have been reluctant to fund video art, and they have been slow to accept our cautious proposals. It is often said that the British situation is that the video art scene is not taken seriously. It seems video has to wait until the day after tomorrow for an equivalent length of time to attain sufficient credibility. This is surprising when evidence of the status of video art has been established for some time. Unlike the cinema which has a long history, with awards for promotion and distribution of its products, video has been around for some time, and when most of our knowledge of video art is from the 1960s and 1970s, and now only support relevant to the history of the video art scene. Just that in our interest is still primarily with film.

However, to for video arts first test in the recognition that the initial aim of our plan had been achieved over a longer period than anticipated. Effort was made to find a more permanent space and so we concentrated our efforts first on establishing a permanent space, and then on producing a catalogue. Following this, we were offered a space in a public funded gallery to exhibit and show video art. We started in last year, having secured the space, and it proved to be a good catalogue

where not only lecturers use them in class, but where more and more playback facilities are appearing in libraries. The market for home systems is also taking a firm hold in Britain, and one can conceive of that as a possible outlet in the not too distant future. Exhibition organisers are using the catalogue as a useful textbook to the activity, as well as a listing since it includes lengthy statements by each artist. Copyright remains with the artist and is monitored by us. Broadcast outlets are minimal in Britain. We have only three air channels and about the same on cable. The BBC control two of the first. The competitive element between them and the third which is commercial is staked on fighting for the highest audience ratings, trials, coupled with the pull of that technical excellence which is at a premium above all else and dominated by over cautious and powerful unions. Leaves little room for the risky business of entering into "experimental" broadcast. Occasionally a renegade producer has shown video art, but it is soon forgotten as a freakish phenomenon. And the cable stations, which are based in country towns, and very much local community projects struggling to survive or re-activate. The concept of video art has not occurred to them, despite numerous efforts. But we are working on it.....

David Hall

VIDEO AND ITS DISTRIBUTION by Maria Gloria Bilocchi

I will focus on the apparently most convenient channel of distribution for the art tapes, which seems to be the broadcasting television. The language of video is a language by subtraction or reductive rather than synthetic ("less is more" Mies van der Rohe). It does not have the urgency or emergence of an enlarged communication, it is something said among few - the cut here is a clipping. So far, within a majority system as television (and the intention is similar both for the official or independent channel), as the medium is perceived as the message, the videotape (and which one? how can we put everything together, just only because the medium used is the video?), the videotape showed in Tv., was saying, is lost and misunderstood, a message from minority to majority, and nothing in effect would change. The truth of television is all commercials - the hidden persuasions of the name, of the image shown, the emulations. But emulation means fashion, and becomes common sense, standardization, homogenization, mediocrity, collective mimesis, fear of the self.

And how could an art tape be emulated, if its own territory is inside the expanded insight of the artists? If the explosion with respect to the explosion of the Tv. product, which is a stress, pre-coded, pre-judged by the opinion polls?

This is a reflection on this possibility, concerning the video distribution problem, but how can we really answer this, as the Cartesian logic is not part of our problem, the ideology is missing on a community level, and the articulation of the language of each single video is related to the artist's feeling?

In Tv. the art video would be shown as a work of art, object, and instead it is a subject (produced and not reproduced) and as an object (like painting or other, should be copyable, possessed, stealable). But a painting is together idea, project and object. Instead nobody could even steal a tape, as it is a message, idea and project. If somebody would copy the idea, the subjectivity of the counterfeiter will always appear, and the work would be other. Instead in television everything is a tape, as idea, project and result, from advertising, violence, Tv. games, the commonplace. Television is made to be imitated, and this makes it a means of assault on. Just as the food goes through the mouth, television through people's eyes and ears pervades us with social models, with reality's own recorded image, which is already us. Television steals our reality to reproduce it again to us and make us comfortable with the same, that, before being processed through the electronic circuit, was not manifest to us.

The art tapes, let's talk about video art only, don't to enlarge the problem, is a point of departure, without finality, it is horizontal, unique, and, so far, useless to the community of Tv. spectators. ("useful, as a-moral")

On this matter, if we take some Tv. program, we have a case in point: six channels like New York. Here the art tapes are edited according to criteria which reflect the broadcaster's need, not the artist's, and, as a result, become television.

The editing in this case, also a contribution, giving importance to the technical aspects rather than to the message, which is added to Tv. and not vice, from public to private, instead of from private to public.

There have been projects to create a cable Tv. system, linking museums to private homes, it would be a great idea to enlarge the museum's influence, but this would not be television.

use of a cassette recorder, which is a rather gratuitous gimmick.

It is no secret that the studio of 2" tape. And so is television!

However, the producer is not to be blamed and technologists for the above-mentioned. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work.

The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work.

It is no secret that the studio of 2" tape. And so is television! for those employed in this role, who don't exist.

The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work.

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No risk at all.

The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work.

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I left this work because I realized that, at least in Italy, public

The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work. The producer is the one who is responsible for the quality of the work.

reviewed, prepared in order to be easily and normally accessible, but able to remain in the same place as the original, therefore, no danger.

To finish, I think that it is difficult to say that video art has not reached a state of maturity, and now it is not too different from the other equivalent forms of visual language.

In fact, we are going to see with the video art movement, the cultural development of the city of New York, with its role in curating the exhibition and preparing the video art festival, and the new video art movement, which is a new movement, and it will take care of all branches of the use of this medium.

It will be one of those important steps in the development of video tapes. Its name is "Video '79: videotape the first decade".

My wish is that in the second decade of video art, they will start to be after a while, and then, in the third decade of art, after other works, we will see a lot of new works, and then, in the fourth decade, political, amusing, etc., etc.

It will be a new step in the development of video art, and it will be a new step in the future.

Maria Gloria Bicocchi

OUTLETS FOR VIDEO by Kate Craig

As a video artist and producer I am concerned with the problems of distribution. There are three obvious outlets for the distribution of video work in which I would include galleries, libraries, schools, pay T.V., bars and private homes. I will discuss these three outlets, in turn, with an emphasis on closed circuit.

The content of the video work has a direct relationship to the viability

video artists are reluctant to allow their work to be broadcast or cablecast and the reverse is also true - much of the video work in existence

of the content. In fact, for some artists, the very thought of their work becoming a consumer item is distasteful.

not been, and in the future is unlikely to be, an outlet of much consequence. The nature of broadcasting by artists on this scale has a

There is tremendous value in the opportunity for the sensibility of the artist to be presented on a large public scale - but these aren't in the strict sense of the word presentations of video art works. What the networks and their subsidiaries are offering to the public, and the tremendous power the advertisers exert over content, make this means

The use of cable as an outlet for artists' video tapes is more tangible. The success of public educational T.V., supported to a large extent by subscription, has demonstrated that there is a substantial audience interested in an alternate to commercial television. The opportunity for artists to plug into this network is proven and will no doubt continue on a small scale, but it is very questionable if this market can sustain video artists.

of their profits to provide community access cable stations. These are local stations. I personally know many artists who have cablecast their video work. The problem here is not access to the medium but access to money for the production of tapes. It is a frustrating and infuriating situation, given that the cable companies are extremely rich and the video artists poor. Basically there is no money forthcoming from cable.

In Vancouver, Byron Black produced a series called "Images from Infinity" which ran for a full year, a half hour a week. It was an exciting show and in my opinion the only one worth watching at that time on the com-

and it was a truly collaborative venture, introducing many artists for the first time to cablecasting. "Images from Infinity" was produced, for the most part, in the studios of the cable company with no remuneration. The show was eventually discontinued by the cable station because too much

had to provide the raw video stock for his own copies.

been producing "the Gina Show". It too is a forum for local and

Contributions

Given the attitude of the cable stations it is obvious why individual artists are reluctant to use this channel of distribution. Furthermore,

advertising.

artist of accessing the information to a predictably limited and

private sector and pay T.V.. The potential of the public for viewing

the distribution of video art in these areas, but it requires a

certainly have a large audience to draw from. The alternate galleries

the very nature of the medium, being a child of commercial television, can continue to exist in such specialized and more often than not, stifling and impersonal environments. My tendency more and more, is to believe that unless video art and its artists come out of the closet and into public, that the art form has less and less chance of surviving unless of course, our funding agencies, contrary to public belief, continue to support the medium. The cost of production equipment is rising, contrary to what is believed, because many more artists are demanding access to more and more sophisticated equipment. Give a video artist colour and for the most part there is no turning back - and it goes on from there. Two colour cameras, a special effects generator, time base corrector and maybe even their own T.V. station. But I was talking about closed circuit.

when we use the term distribution I think of two separate meanings. Distribution in the sense of moving the information on the video tapes around the world and accessing video art works to as many people as are currently or potentially interested. If this is what we are talking about then the job so far, has not been badly done. The existence of organizations like the Video Inn in Vancouver, for example, which contains the largest library of non commercially produced video tapes in the world and has published the International Video Exchange Directory for seven years, or the Western Front Society, which harbours over two

artists of other disciplines (also available for public viewing and exchange) attests to the availability of video art tapes.

The video network is growing rapidly and access to the hardware for playback, although often difficult to find, is more often than not, available without cost. So, a relatively free situation already exists, free not only in that the information travels but also very much to the point, free in the sense that with a few exceptions, the work being presented is not being paid for in the real dollars that buy video artists first food, second lodging and third, the materials and equipment necessary for production.

for video art tapes being sold to the public? It is not a question of whether or not video will survive without funding - of course it will survive - but of getting the art into the public domain. Distribution to closed circuit markets is an exciting and very open avenue in this regard.

The future of television as we know it will be in total turmoil during the eighties. The outcome unknown. The threat to network T.V. is very real, as the communications revolution raises its potentially expansive head away from the commercial medium as we know it.

The individuals' control of the information coming over their television sets started with educational subscription T.V. and is now being particularized by the availability of VHS and Betamax equipment, allowing the owner three options. One, to record programming off the air with possibilities such as editing out the commercials and presetting controls for recording while not in the home. This naturally leads to the second option, your own video library. Apart from selections made off the air

music concerts and other cultural events. The third option, with the purchase of a video camera, is to sale your own home video tapes. Which, I might add, is where video artists started in the sixties.

The second option is the most relevant to the video artist in terms of market on 1/2" cassette ranges in price from \$35.00 to \$50.00 - a price to be further reduced if the video disc system is commercially successful. Video disc, on the market for the first time in December of 1978, a system not unlike the long playing record, is advertising programs

publications aimed at the home video market, indicate that the distribution is in a fairly sophisticated audience.

help to break down the conditioning of the T.V. watcher. The problem with video art, vis a-vis the public, is not in the art, but, in the conditioning of an individual raised on an average of two or three hours a day of commercial, minimal content, entertainment oriented, fast clipped, over the top being presented by video artists in our culture. The logging of ten, fifteen, twenty hours of home made T.V. could very well make a more receptive audience

of the past and present, especially if a distributor with the insight

individuals own the equipment. A few thousand might buy. The distribution of artists' video tapes could be a whole new ball game

Kate Craig,

FREE TELEVISION by Michael Goldberg

When was the last time you paid to watch television? I don't mean on gas. I mean, are you buying the products that advertisers are the videotapes you enjoy? Since when has Canadian cable paid for when was the last time you paid to attend a viewing of video art or a documentary work of social import? Who sponsors the news?

paying.

In Canada, TV is free. That is, it relies by and large on indirect taxation (A.K.A. successful advertising) and on some direct government money. Video activity is supported almost exclusively by the Canada

grants were given liberally to community media access activity)

(otherwise known as poverty). Some artists of skill and repute may survive off the Canada Council, and operating funds are provided to a

film analogy) for it to thrive

work. But let's face it, few artist/producers will live well from such earnings

This is not to suggest that artists' fees are an unimportant issue - quite the contrary. It is crucial that the professionalism of the independent video producer gain recognition. It is also advisable for artists to try to live as much as possible from the work they must enjoy. Some tapes

and not for all time!

but little work of quality would be seen in public.

foster alternatives to mass consumption TV and sensitize viewers to

creativity in their personal and political lives. There may be video prime-time, quad. Tv; and I wish them the best of luck. But there are and freedom is limited in that context.

If this is true, then one important direction for us to move is toward

I am hopeful that we may achieve such a model in Vancouver. There are many aspects of such a project needy of attention, for this article, I feel it is timely to look into the question of financing.

The best things in life may be free, but this applies more to dancers than to video artists. We work with a more expensive medium of expression.

Let us not delude ourselves; fundraising is a key prerogative for a broadcasting project to get off the ground. I doubt that we can expect the few sympathetic funding agencies to subsidize media art from beginning to

isation in our country). Where will this support come from?

As an aside, I would dwell for a moment on the effect that funding sources and arrangements can have on an outlet of expression as important as television. In spite of its achievements, American P.B.S. is being called the "Petroleum Broadcasting System" for good reason. Freedom of expression is held to be a basic tenet of our democratic society. Yet funding pro-

of funded bodies. Artists who live for a number of years on grants may feel they are free to create as they wish, but when this same funding "with no strings attached" is suddenly cut off, as it inevitably is, few remain unscarred by their quest for other security or sustenance. Short lived grants, on the other hand, prevent long range vision and this insecurity works to the detriment of continuity and quality.

While there is no guarantee that the Canada Council will maintain its independence from the government that provides a majority of its revenue, we must continue to depend on it as an ongoing source of funds for video production activity. Grants to individual artists and production groups will continue to be adjudicated by its own assessors. This means that it will be nigh impossible for a station to constitute a permanent production group, but at the same time it assures that quality will be judged independently. It may be possible for the Council to one day set up an artist-in residence program for such stations.

The Canada Council will need encouragement to provide start-up funds for a broadcast facility. Even though an entire station should cost less than one studio at the CBC, it will be difficult to raise the funds required. Ultimately we must look to a mix of grants and donations to cover capital costs. The CRTC must also be assured that ongoing operating costs will be covered, before it approves a license application. It is essential that the Commission be convinced the licensee will not be controlled by a non-licensed provider of funding, especially if the major source of station income is government. Without going into details of arguments regarding

best in the long run.

adequately cover the financial needs of a station

above "broadcasting fee" obviously applies to a tape only once.

and when possible, donating cash.

ment known as fundraising drives. Still, this must be looked into by on-air marathons, solicitation by mail, and personal contacts. It cause of alternative television

Politic, Canada's leading gay newspaper. I believe that the media, including television agitated their readers and viewers to vicariously encourage the Attorney General to feel secure in making such a move. I think it is more than just a technical legal matter.

I watched an artist space in Toronto recently try to sell itself through a long interview on TV News - they looked ~~awful~~ and ridiculous. It wasn't entirely their own fault. Art doesn't fit as easily on television as paintings do on walls. Television is not an adequate museum. These reservations should be taken into consideration, the rush of television is sometimes an alluring mirage.

But we all know that stuff? Or do we?

Are we still suggesting for example that Susan Britton's tapes, or Lisa Steele's tapes or Rodney Werden's tapes be beta-taped and piped into the Holiday Inn?

What artists have called High Profile is often incomprehensible to the home entertainment industry or the television networks.

I would like to take a closer look at what we mean by video publishing for the home entertainment or educational industry.

Arton's has just completely axed such video publishing intentions as the investment capital is just not there, at least within public sector.

So in discussing TV Art in the home, would I like, if you are willing, to focus on what do we mean by video art in the home, what information are we thinking of selling and who is going to make it readily available?

Clive Robertson

produce programs for smaller audiences. Lás Brown of the New York Times suggested that with the new technology broadcast TV will be comparable to major newspapers and magazines such as The New York Times, Time magazine or Newsweek and cable TV, in reaching smaller audiences, will be comparable to the art magazine or trade journals.

Cable television is reaching 16.9% of American homes with 10 million subscribers. By 1981 the percentage will be 26% with 26 million subscribers. In the near future cable will be the natural conduit for art television. It has the advantage of making available extensive periods of time on one channel and it can reach a specialized sector of the population. Also, cable TV is free of the regulations of commercial and educational TV.

As an art television audience builds up there will be a demand to buy programs for home viewing. Videodiscs are the most direct new technological advance. Projected sales of videodisc players is 1.5 million sets by 1981. Owners will be able to buy videodiscs on a variety of subjects and people will be able to watch art videodiscs of their choice in the comfort of their home.

It is apparent that in the next decade we must market video art through cable television and create a demand for videodiscs. In this way we can expand beyond the narrow market of the gallery system and we will create a larger and more receptive audience that will financially support the work of the video artist.

Jaime Davidovich

INTERNATIONAL VIDEO ART SYMPOSIUM

Thursday, March 7, 1979, 7.30

SPEAKERS: Michael Goldberg (via video tape), from Vancouver
Jaime Davidovich, Artists' Television Network, New York
Clive Robertson, Artos, Toronto

Michael
Goldberg:

Hi there. Thank you for inviting me from Vancouver, to speak
to you about the newly accessible to the public at large.

Hi there. Thank you for tuning into our program tonight. Make use of this medium of television by artists across Canada. (It doesn't work either, just a sec.)

recorded onto video, it just doesn't come across on a small screen. On the other hand, we have the reverse situation here, where I'm on a tiny screen way up at the front of the room, and all of you are out there, and I've got to figure out a way to make it work so that you're not too bored with this and so I'll have a good time too. I'm not quite sure how to do it. The medium of television and the recording systems that we use that are newly accessible, are easier to use than the older, bulkier, more expensive, more sophisticated, complicated recording systems. They work or not. For example, an installation in an art gallery is different from an installation in a television studio, and it's different from an audience at home. The way that one puts across what one wants to, varies according to each situation.

I will assume, if you don't mind, that some video art, some video tapes or closed circuit installations are made for that purpose or concept, and that there are also a lot of tapes that can work and will work in the context of the broadcast station. The prob-

It's very difficult to get into the broadcast field with work that
They're trying to protect job security and so forth. Another
problem is that the technical sophistication of the bottom of
signals that exist in two inch quad or the tape systems that

art people and people who are doing documentary work, who are interested or involved in social change (and I'm not talking about parties and politics, or political activist groups; I'm talking about people who are interested in social change, not correct or change). In Europe, the schism is very wide. The artists and the people who are interested in social change don't see eye to eye. They are very critical of one another.

So, in this situation, we have to face this problem square on. I think a lot of people who are interested in social change will have to face this problem square on.

The other thing is, there is no way we can afford to be a union shop. We won't be able to pay most of the people involved. We will have to be a union shop. We will have to be a union shop. fees. Now, I've dealt with the whole question of financing in the paper that I presented to this Kingston colloquium. I ask you to read it, to see my position. Actually, what's in there and what is not in there is a bit of a mystery. I think that in a few years; sometimes in formal discussions of large groups, but very often smaller groups and sometimes personal situations. There is no master plan at this point for us to run to the CRTC and say, "We've got our equipment and so forth." We don't; not yet. But we're moving that way and I think people are very interested in that. I think that we have to find, constitute a workable model. I said a bit earlier that we are going to be on the air for a few hours a night. Well, what's going to be on the air when we're off the air? (silence)

CLIVE
ROBERTSON:

I agree with a few of the things that Michael said. Whilst we all know Michael to have very good intentions, he often speaks out for Canadian video, almost as if they were policy statements, even casually, in that tape, he suggested that we were very fortunate in Canada that there wasn't as he called it, a schism, like there is in Europe, between the producers of political and artistic tapes. And he said, just prior to that, that in Canada there really aren't any political tapes. That's basically what he was saying. So there's no wonder there isn't a schism. As far as

his attitudes towards the Vancouver proposed T.V. station not paying artists, I think that type of thinking is more in tune with the beginning of this decade rather than the end of it.

To comment on Art and T.V. or T.V. Art in the Home at this time, is not quite as subjective, pleasing as I would have found the subject a mere twelve months ago. At that time in Los Angeles, I was raising the flag for future video publications. As you may or may not know, I have been involved in potential video publishing, both as an artist and a latent publisher. Artists in Toronto did produce two art-type video cassettes, one of Robert Fillion, the other work was a tape on Stephen McLauffrey. Now, depending upon your objectives as a video artist, getting video art on T.V. or cable networks, or to be seen, as a worthwhile struggle. And when it in fact does happen, it can be said to be a step forward for the video art community at large.

I personally agree to such broad or cable casting with two reservations, which I suggest should be considered, at least with the Canadian context. The first reservation is economic. While individual funding is still available for artists working with video, the broader sector of video activity including equipment updating and access, can no longer be guaranteed by the various cultural funding agencies. I realize that there are a number of video artists who are a true video art form, but for now, I address the true problem which is that artists are deprived from state funding sources which include most of us. Given this somewhat obvious, if not abrupt economic, and therefore cultural change, there is, I suggest, no longer the case of opportunity for artists to merely let the production to some form of television. There will be a need for artists to be paid for airing tapes on television, for payment for a public, free access, as it is called, will in fact become a more effective failure. As both cable and T.V. networks soar, and as inverse, artists become poorer, such free aid to television by artists has to stop.

The second reservation, is a question of exact. What type of information artists want to pipe into the home via T.V. Is it solely an aesthetic art that is to be exclusively destined to be it for do it or for education? It for education? I don't believe that the relationship between art to television should be casual. I don't believe that anything a video artist does either aesthetically works or fits with television. The argument that video art can succeed in television, making it a reactive force to television, is a thing that no longer is intelligent. Likewise, I don't think that whatever artists chose to place on television is necessarily close to the video art form. That is why I ask the question, what type of information? It's not rhetorical, I would like to focus my art capabilities in a panel to exact that question. What do video artists need to know?

information for television? In reverse, do we want to indulge in fantasies of non information for non information television?

I recently did a comparison study of T.V. news for Centerfold

I believe that the media, including television and television

that is, I recently watched an artist space in Toronto, try to sell himself through a long item on T.V. news. They looked puerile and ridiculous. It wasn't entirely their own fault. Art doesn't fit as easily museum. These reservations should be taken into consideration. The rush of television is sometimes an alluring mirage

But we all know that stuff, or do we? Are we still suggesting, for example, that Susan Britton's tapes or Lisa Steele's tapes or the Holiday Inn? What artists have called high profile is often vision networks.

I would like to take a closer look at what we mean by video publishing for the home entertainment of educational industry.

as the investment capital is just not there, at least within the public sector. By this, I mean, that whilst I agree with Micheal that the artists are good administrators, I don't know of any artist organization which has the type of business experience with the commercial Betamax market. So, in discussing T.V. Art in the Home, I would like, if you will, to focus on what do we mean by T.V. Art in the Home? what information are we thinking of selling, and who is going to make it readily available?

DAVIDOVICH. I think that Michael and Clive made some very interesting remarks. I wish that Michael were here so that we can follow up on the discussion. But, since he's not here, hopefully this commentary will be taped, and we can have a transcript. I think we are focusing on some basic issues and I'm very pleased that this is happening on this, the last evening of the Symposium. What I'm going to do, is read very briefly what I have here. Some of these things we focused on before. Then, I will concentrate on the experience at the Artists' Television Network in New York, which I represent.

using radio or television, and the future of television: satellites, and video-disc. Right now in the United States, there are 105 satellite-earth stations, and a lot of communication is insensitive to distance. It costs the same to send a signal from New York to Chicago, as it does to send a signal from New York to New York. This means that it will be economically feasible to produce programs for a smaller audience. Les Browne of the New York Times suggested that with the new technology, broadcast T.V. will be comparable to the art magazines and trade journals. Cable television, the other part, is reaching 16.9% of American homes with 16 million subscribers. In the near future, cable will be 30% with 26 million subscribers. In the near future, cable will be the natural conduit for art television. It has the advantage of making available extensive periods of time on one channel. Also, cable T.V. is free of the regulations of commercial and educational T.V. As an art television audience builds up, there will be a demand to buy programs for home viewing. Video discs are in the promotional stage only in Atlanta, Georgia. Viewers will be able to buy video tapes on a variety of subjects and people will be able to watch art video tapes of their choice in the comfort of their home. It is apparent that in the next decade we will create the demand for video discs. In this way, we can expand the work of the video artist.

Now, I want to describe the organization of Cable Soho and then we will grow into the Artists' Television Network. In December 1976, Cable Soho produced the first live transmission from Manhattan-Cable television, and then in January 1977, did two other pilots. In August 1977, the organization was dissolved. Every body resigned and we formed a new organization that was called the Artists' Television Network. The reasons for that were several. The name Cable Soho, is too limited to a neighbourhood of New York City and the word 'cable' is misleading. Very few people are more like an electrical company or a sewer pipe company. So we

in two sections, in two parts. The first part would be 28 minutes and the second part would be the other part. The remainder of 15 minutes of the film would be another work, another artist.

Now, the programming committee also has the responsibility to suggest productions. Some of the programs that we saw in this ad were productions by the artists. The television network, now, with regard to the production, the artist owns 100% of the copyright, and also owns 100% of all close circuit distribution. But, the Artists Satellite Television network controls the television distribution. The artist can go to a television station and sell a program, but we have the first option to distribute the program to the regular television channels.

Now, after the selection committee has approved the program, a contract is signed by the president of the organization and the individual producer, artists organization or the artist. When we schedule and show the program, we set standards right now, the program, when it is shown in Manhattan alone, the artist or the producer receives 100% of the money for a 30 minute tape. Even if the tape is produced by the artist. The Artists Satellite Television network, if the program is more than 30 minutes, the artist receives 75% per show. We shall, show a program 4 times or more season, and this is New York alone. As our audience increases, and we have other cable stations participating in this network, the \$6.75 would be multiplied by the number of cable stations that would be part of the network.

One important factor in building up the audience was demonstrated in the survey conducted by an independent firm, hired by Manhattan Cable Television. In the first season of the Soho television series, this survey demonstrated some very interesting facts about audience, or about what you could call, the viewership. Twenty-five percent of the total subscribers to the Manhattan cable system and Teleporter, which is the other system in Manhattan, knew about the Soho Television Series. The most striking part of this survey was that 90 percent of the total subscribers of these two systems watched the programs regularly. This means that right now the Soho television series has an audience of about 100,000 people in Manhattan alone. This rating of 90 makes the whole network of artists programs the most watched television series of cable, or channel 10, right now. Therefore, we are in a very, very strategic position to the audience in New York City, that our program is directly routed to watching this type of avant garde arts program.

Two months ago, the rest of the City was franchised for cable, and the cable system was completed. At the same time, a company called Citywide, which is the second largest cable operator in this country, with 150 cable stations, was completed. Next year,

with half a million subscribers. Therefore, we are hopeful that
stations around the country.

Now, the other aspect that is important, is where and how we produce these programs. The Artists' Television Network owns no equipment; we only have a monitor and a cassette player. Television, which is a new organization. It's only two years old, as old as the Artists' Television Network. As the name indicates, it is a television network. It is a cable distribution. The Center for Non-Broadcast Television in New York is the only facility in New York City that has the programs live to the rest of the City. Furthermore, the Center for Non Broadcast Television has a direct link to the Gulf and West Star Satellite, so that we can cable cast to cable stations, Television stations, or Broadcast stations that wish to take them.

[illegible]

ADDENDUM: PBS is like that.

unwatchable for a while. I don't know what you show.

JAMIE: But, if PBS is not showing it, it's not at all about, and, probably, it's not about the kind of people around the country.

CLIVE: They're being fed into Canada.

JAMIE: In Canada, maybe, but I don't know what the situation is that would allow it to be shown there. I don't know if it's a very different situation there, maybe eastern Canada, maybe the mid-east, or the south.

Another thing I don't know about is a variety. Yesterday we showed a program called "FRANKIE" which was a variety show. It was a very good program, and it was very good. I don't know if it was a very good program, but this is not all of the program. You would have to see the whole program. I don't think you could judge from two minutes of the program whether it would or would not be shown on PBS.

Another thing I don't know about is we are not. PBS would never show nudity in their programs. They would never be allowed to use so called four letter words. On the other hand, we have no censorship of pornography. We have no censorship whatsoever.

Also, there are a lot of people who are not public. The public has no input there. The only people that are public are the programs that certain minority groups on the east coast would be interested in watching.

JAI ME. I've been in development for an artist who's got a very strong program we're talking about a... to have the tapes, or records, to... we've... is... and also... art sets, a...

CLIVE: So you don't think that... I think that the... in the... it's still going to

JAI ME. First of all, I would like to make a comparison with records. We... and even... bought the... the... the... these... cassette. But, if the people don't know the program, then it would be very difficult to sell them a Betamax copy of it. I think... it and I think the approach of the distribution system in the United States... artist... of the... but there's no... work and when I say Cable, I'm talking about right now. Maybe... change. Maybe it is going to open up to more artists, to more... I will take a city that I just came from, Iowa City. Iowa City has just franchised a cable system. The cable system in Iowa City is going to start operation in October of this year. The

Gallery of Iowa State University is going to be the local sponsor of the programs and the gallery will pay the Artists' Television Network, which, in turn, will pay to the individual artists, a fee for each program. Now, what the gallery is going to do, is probably show the local television programs, and the originator is Iowa City. Now, next month we go to the Los Angeles Museum of Art, in Los Angeles, California. There, they have a program already started on Channel 5, which is the feeder cable. We will send our programs directly to Channel 5 in Los Angeles and they can either take all the programs or they can take part and they can put on their local programs as well. What we're doing is with the Live Injection Point, is that the program on the satellite, then either a Cable station can take it or.

AUDIENCE: How would they get the lines from New York?

JAIME: Now? They do it from the same place. If we have a program originated in the morning, the cable that we will send a signal

IAN MURRAY: The value of the satellite is that it is decentralized, is decentralized, so I assume that the network will restructure it so that, you know, it could be one beep in the mornings.

JAIME: I think you're saying that Television instead of Jaime. So Soho Television is a project of the Artists' Television Network. If you decide not to have a series of artists from Los Angeles, I would send Los Angeles to get originated in Los Angeles. But send a signal from New York and from Kansas City and Los Angeles. You know that's what makes the satellite.

AUDIENCE: Is the whole thing decentralized as well? How does it work? Is there a hierarchical structure? Do your different franchises in the Network have equal votes?

JAIME: The way we're thinking about it is that we have its organization. We are going to deal directly with the cable company, we have a partnership that will have that power that decision. I will leave it to the local organization to decide. In Iowa City, they will have the right to decide that they want to show what we're doing or they can take all or you can take one or you can take more or you can just send the programs and we will send it. It will be our decision to receive the programs. Now, there.

IAN: It's your decision to receive the programs and to show them in Manhattan. It's your decision to show them in Los Angeles, Moins and Chicago.

JAIME: That would be between Des Moines and Chicago.

AUDIENCE: But without any other franchise, it would be as a clearing house or.

JAIME: I don't know, we don't know yet, because we haven't reached that point. There's something else too. Iowa City, for example, for the first couple of years will be able to receive programs via satellite, but they will not be able to send programs. So, I don't know. Maybe it will be like a clearing house like you mentioned. Also, there is an organization in Washington, that is called the Transponder Allocation Committee. What they are is a clearing house, for different groups that want to have access to satellite. So, maybe there is a way that the Artists' Televison Network would be part of the Transponder Allocation and we will make sure that the satellite will be available to these different arts groups. In other areas there is no cable system. In Europe, we're going to start sending the programs as a regular closed circuit program until they are able to develop a cable system. I understand that in France there is now being built the first cable system in Europe, with a hundred thousand subscribers. It's going to be in operation in October of this year.

DAVID HALL: What do you mean "the first in Europe"?

JAIME: That's what they told me.

DAVID: It's not the first in Europe.

JAIME: But, it's working through subscribers in the old way and the American cable system.

DAVID: Oh, you mean a subscription cable.

JAIME: Yes, I know there is a cable system in Germany and England, I think has cable, but I'm talking about a structure similar to the American system.

AUDIENCE: It seems that we've got two very distinct point of view here. One is yours, which is very concrete and optimistic. I think there are obvious questions to be raised about it and the content itself. And then Clive seemed to imply a thesis but most of it it seems to me, did not make sense, since he didn't seem to draw any conclusions.

CLIVE: There are two or three questions there that I was hoping that the people in this room would be willing to discuss. The major one being, what type of information do artists want to put onto television.

LISA STEELE: I think that's the question. I don't think there is a consensus among producers of video art, that the logical extension of video art is television in the home. Everybody admits that there is an inadequate system of distribution. Tapes go to art galleries

and educational institutions which is most of our market right now. There's a tantalizing feel to what you're saying, Jaime. It sounds so great, in a way. And, yet, it could be reinforcing the sort of system of communication that's already set up, rather than undermining or challenging it. I could simply be feeding into the already existing form. As a person that produces video and takes it out and shows it to people, it's very hard when people ask you what the difference is between my tapes and television? "Why isn't this television?" I think there are different concerns in information. I don't know if that's the right word, or communications. I'm not trying to take an anarchist stance but I'm not sure that this is not a kind of network of artists' publications that isn't going to fit very directly into an already existing corporate system of information dispersal. Maybe nothing else exists, maybe it's all mythology. But, there was and has been a sort of development within artists and people using other media like video that rejected certain kinds of gallery structures and it said that those gallery structures were not adequate for communicating and presenting and said, "What is an alternative?" I'm not sure, but I have a feeling about a cable system, about a satellite broadcast system, about PBS, about all kinds of already existing hardware systems. But, feeding artist information into that is, in fact, no more than a lubricant in a way. The artist is lubricating the existing form of communication, rather than doing anything else.

CLIVE: Obviously, we do not suggest that performance art is in actual fact, ~~reducing~~, that it doesn't automatically mean that the only problem is one of mass distribution, and with that solved, everything will flow freely. And, I'm not suggesting that that is such a direct comparison with video art. But, there are certain reasons why artists would gravitate to publications about their work; it's a more clear form, it's a clearer means of communicating with an audience, than in actual fact.

JAIME: We're talking about video, it's something that has time. It has movement. You can communicate paint and sculpture through a magazine, but with video, it's very difficult. One thing it.

IAN MURRAY: As an artist, I think that communicating with a reproduction of a sculpture is more difficult than with a reproduction of part of a video tape.

JAIME: But, with sculpture, at least you have an idea. With video tape you see on film it's very difficult to understand it. Magazine reproductions.

IAN MURRAY: That's not true, because you don't get fooled into thinking that

that's what the work is actually like, and you are when you are photographing sculptures. There's a full body of knowledge that led artists to start dealing with video in the first place and I think that to a very, very great extent, the fact we have video symposiums and video distributorships and the belief that we can take a channel where there is television and just put the art into it, totally forgets all of those basic interests to do with the quality of the object.

JAIME I think there is room in the gallery or the museum for video installation, especially for certain kinds of single channel pieces but, it's no way to develop an audience. The audience that will come to the museum, to watch them on television is very, very small. One of the problems, is with the museum curators. I have talked to many curators about video art and they tell me the same thing. They don't know what to do with this video art.

IAN MURRAY Well, I think we should point a finger. Now, what do we do with slide art?

JAIME Slide? Well, they give a lecture, so they go to the library, they take a slide and they show it.

IAN. No, I mean that some artists use slides in their work as the artform. What do they do?

JAIME. What do they do?

IAN. Some artists make books. Some artists use material that go moldy. what I'm saying is that video has the potential to be used in a disembodied, non-objective way of translating information from culture to culture, from situation to situation that doesn't show it's own structural basis. I don't think that you are aware of the impact of it going to another place.

JAIME well, I think that television art, or video art has a very small audience. It's experimental. I think it's going to stay that way and I think it's very important. Not everything that is shown in a gallery is the most interesting work. In Europe, the best work is not the work shown in the commercial; it's the work that the artists show in their own lofts.

IAN: The problem in the question of transmitting chunks of culture from city to city and situation to situation, with no consideration of the situations. That's what I'm talking about. I'm talking about a practice a few years ago, of artists going into a place and creating an exhibition there, a tendency that artists have to develop work for a specific situation, and I think that is a point of interest for artists who use video. I think what you're talking about is a wholesale dissolution of a lot of these concepts.

JAJME: It's just another alternative.

AUDIENCE: An alternative where you're thinking of a specific situation, where you're putting information into it.

JAJME: It's another form, you know. There are many different ways. I don't think that everything produced in video should be shown in television. There are different ways. I think what you're saying, is completely legitimate. I myself, in my own work, do what you're saying. But, I think the Network is opening the avenues and opening up to the possibility for other work, and also opens the possibility to develop an audience that will appreciate more, the work that you do.

IAN: The problem with your system, is that it assumes a community of interest that is not geographic or not economic or political. It's rather a community of outputs, basically. That you're programming for a very mass situation.

PEGGY GALE: Are you saying that that shouldn't be done? I mean, you are saying it shouldn't be done, but why shouldn't it?

IAN: I'm not saying it shouldn't be done, but that seems to be the basic element of it.

PEGGY: I mean, every time we ship something out into a network, we're letting a random audience and the randomness gives it the potential to say 'I don't want to watch this - 'click' or 'I do', depending

IAN: But, that's destroying the idea that we should be concerned about American stations coming across the border.

PEGGY: We're still talking about cable here.

IAN: We're talking about 200 cable systems that are held together by satellite

PEGGY: So, you're saying they should be destroyed.

IAN: It seems to me, that this discussion involves a lot of different aspects. What we have here (A.T.N.) is a very optimistic, developing thing that is obviously going to become bigger and do a lot of people good. But, there are some assumptions that this particular example involves that perhaps we can discuss.

For example, the Museum of Modern Art could send their whole collection around the world, from community to community - what's that mean? I'm not sure whether that's necessarily a bad thing but it's certainly pretty peculiar.

JAIME: . . . It's an imperialistic type of dissemination of information. It's the same kind of thing that you were talking about the other day: taking abstract expressionism and establishing it as a major form of art.

AUDIENCE: - inaudible -

JAIME: There is one thing that we do at the Artists' Television Network, which is one reason we have to sell our projects, which is let people from all over the world have input into our programs. For example, this season, we had programs from Canada, we had programs from France, we had programs from South America and next season we are going to have programs from Japan, from all over; but we are going to show it in New York. We are not going to show them in Japan because they don't have the system but we can show it in New York. And also, we would like to make the artists cable project accessible to other artists because I agree with you, to have the same attitude as the Rockefeller Collection, would be awful. But, one of the great things about video, is that we can get information from many different places. The value in this kind of symposium, is that we can sit down together and watch a lot of work done in Japan, watch a lot of work done in England, and watch a lot of work done in Vancouver, etc. This is essential. This will be, I think, the decision of the artist. This is what is called the Artists' Television Network. It is with artists, by artists, and for artists. We are not involved in administrators of anything like that, so the Rockefeller Foundation was the Museum of Art, was an institution. We were offered to be part of the institutions and we refused, but we want to form. . . .

AUDIENCE: But, your Network is obviously going to become a major institution.

JAIME: Not necessarily.

AUDIENCE: Well, if you plan to go on, as you have been doing, you're going to be as major an institution as any in New York.

JAIME: No, the problem is that we have no access.

CLIVE: That's not a problem as far as I can see. My question is, if video art is going to influence through television, I still don't see it as being a very useful education link, somehow.

DAVID HALL: It depends on the objectives of any individual artist, unless you're generalizing about what you're saying.

CLIVE: I'm just saying and you probably agree, that art can't be taught through books, You know, video art cannot be taught coherently

through watching video art coming through. . .

IAN: Maybe video art is most easily contained like television, which means that television can somehow be the image of video art. I know that when I was doing some artist work for television, I ended up using as much film or slide work or audio work as video.

PEGGY: But, surely, the question is not whether you can maintain the purity and prestige of some mythical video art. It is not so singular a thing that has to be kept safe from the rest of the world so that it can maintain its integrity, is. . .

CLIVE: We're talking about a cultural force through television which is not just incredibly powerful but which has a habit of digesting, not only artist culture, but street culture at an incredibly powerful rate. And which has the effect of immodernizing culture very, very quickly.

LISA STEELE: I want to point out and it may seem crazy, that television encourages a particular type of behaviour that everybody complains about. So to put different content within a specific broadcast television or cable television within the home, may, in fact, continue to encourage that behaviour. In terms of work it's a particular socializing tool. Irregardless of whether it's video art, or 'Mork and Mindy', it's a socializing tool. I don't know the alternative.

JAIME: But what about magazines. The thing is you publish a magazine, in much the same way. . . We're talking about distribution. We're not talking about content, we're talking about plain distribution. Time magazine publish a magazine; they send it to the news stand; they send it to subscribers; you pay, you get the magazine. Right? They get subscriptions, they send the thing, whatever. They have a different mailing list. So here the question is the distribution of the system of television. The magazine I get at home, too, I read it at home, I read in the subway, or any place I choose to read it. Television, maybe one day we will have a different kind of television where you can put it in your pocket and you can watch a show on the subway, too. So as far as distribution is concerned, I don't think there's anything wrong in going home, lying in bed or staying home and watching video art on television, in my home. I don't see anything wrong with that. It could be like reading a magazine. And if you say to the people, no, the only way that you can watch video art is to go to a room, or to go to the artist's loft, it would be like saying that the only way I could read a certain magazine would be to go to the publisher's house.

DAVID HALL: You know, I think the worry is that there are bad associations

with television. You can't make video art assume whether you show it on television through your system, or in a pristine gallery, but it's really never done it to that work. It's the responsibility of the artist anyway to recognize that. Whether you're at home watching it or whether you're watching it in a gallery, it's still going to have the same effect. Unless you take into some kind of account, the inherent problem in taking on meaning. So many people do that, and say, well it's got nothing to do with television, this is video. And I can't accept this, I think that. . . .

IAN MURRAY: It seems to me that most of what we see in television is film. I think the problem is you're offering the artists a sort of static way of getting the things around. It's a set situation. The object has so many inherent qualities. . . .

INTERVIEWER: I have a question, how do you define video art?

IAN: I would say video art is probably as interesting a genre as etchings. I think it's interesting for different kinds of situations.

INTERVIEWER: Why don't you give me a definition?

IAN: Well, video is not television in the same way as audio tape is not radio or writing is not a magazine. I don't know how else I can explain it to you.

DAVID HALL: I think your analysis may be true in a number of years, but I don't think that it's true now.

- discussion inaudible -

IAN: O.K. what I'm saying is that I don't want to see it contained realistically the way people contain other things. I think we can deal with video art as a kind of containment of contemporary art, so you can understand it.

PEGGY: But, that's exactly what we're not doing, though. That was my point a couple of minutes ago. I think we're getting confused here. On the one hand you're saying that well if you put video on T.V., then it becomes television and not video. . . .

JAIME: Television has such a bad taste with all of us.

- discussion inaudible -

CLIVE: I'd like T.V. to take 25 times longer to say what they say in 30 seconds; to deal with the same information, but to take longer to deal with it. . . . Cable could do it but they don't have the economic basis to do it.

JAIME: Why not? In April, there will be a very interesting program that the Center for Non-Broadcast Television is doing. This is not related to art, this is information. I think it's very interesting that you brought it up. It's going to be a problem dealing with the multinational corporations in the United States. This is the first problem of this nature done in the United States using the cable system. And the problem is that more and more job in the United States, are being lost to foreign countries. For instance, in the television industry, the factories are being closed, and the set are being made in Taiwan, they are being made in Hong Kong, Japan, et cetera. And a lot of people in the United States are losing jobs. So the Machinist Union in the United States organized this program and it is going to be cable-cast from the Center for Non-Broadcast Television, the last week in April. It is going to reach 200 cable stations around the country. with a live telephone line from different people all over the country directly to the Center. There will be a representative from the government, there will be the president of the Machinists Union, there will be representatives of the companies that are being forced to close down because of foreign competition. This is just one way that cable is going to be used. The program is called Runaway Jobs. Later there will be other programs dealing with other crucial political issues, which will get the community involved, not only the art, that is one of the problems but the community at large. They will be able to have a continuous feedback that they couldn't have with the commercial television. Their time is too valuable, there are too many pressures and too many millions of dollars at stake. I don't think that we have the political base or the power base to change that structure. But we can have this other thing that cable can do to get the very crucial issues. You know, this has a lot of impact. And this is one thing that the broadcast television stations are afraid of. They are afraid of this potential in the cable system.

- remainder of discussion inaudible -